

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONFERENCE 2009

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

16 July 2009

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide feedback from the Scrutiny Conference held on 11 June 2009 at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 As Members are aware this was the second year that this conference was held to enhance the co-ordination of Scrutiny by involving all of the Scrutiny Members, Cabinet Members and officers in identifying the important issues to be examined in detail over the year ahead by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.2 This was a unique event, not just for the Council, but in terms of good scrutiny practice in demonstrating efforts to achieve shared goals and common objectives to ensure improved services are delivered to the residents of Sunderland.

3. Objective of the Conference

- 3.1 The objective of the conference was very similar to last year's conference which was to share ideas and suggestions in order to plan the work ahead, and in doing so, create a co-ordinated 'team' approach to Scrutiny across the Council.
- 3.2 The conference was not intended to agree work programmes, but was the starting point for the year ahead in sharing ideas around key themes and ways of working and arriving at common objectives.

4. Attendance at the Conference

- 4.1 104 delegates attended the conference, compared to 79 delegates at last year's conference, as outlined below:-

	Members	Officers (to include partners)
2009 Conference	41	38
2010 Conference	43	61

- 4.2 The conference was opened by the Right Worshipful Mayor of the City of Sunderland, Councillor Dennis Richardson. Councillor Tate as Chairman of the Management Scrutiny Committee and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Watson both welcomed delegates to the conference.
- 4.3 Dave Smith, the Council's Chief Executive delivered a key speech on the changing role of Scrutiny within public service delivery. This was followed by Dave Jennings, CAA Lead from the Audit Commission and Charlotte Burnham, the Council's recently appointed Head of Overview and Scrutiny who talked to delegates about a move from Scrutiny of services to Scrutiny of place and the essential ingredients for delivering effective Scrutiny.

5. Delegate Feedback

- 5.1 As the conference is now an annual event, delegates were asked to complete a conference evaluation form, which will be used to inform the organisation of next year's conference. Only 19 evaluation forms were returned but the small amount of feedback indicated that delegates thought the event was most informative and very motivating, more time in the breakout sessions proved worthwhile and requested fewer speakers next time.
- 5.2 Comments included: *'Thoroughly enjoyed the morning with much fruitful discussion'*, *'improvement on last year's first conference'* and *'very informative'*.

6. Breakout Sessions

- 6.1 Seven breakout sessions were held based around the Scrutiny Committees membership and remits. The time allocated to this year's breakout sessions was extended, based upon requests from Members last year and proved beneficial to all. Regrettably those Councillors who served on more than one Scrutiny Committee could not attend both breakout sessions, however, this will be addressed for next year's conference.

7. Preparations for the 2010 Scrutiny Conference

- 7.1 In an attempt to plan ahead, arrangements are currently underway to secure a date for next year's conference. A tentative date of **20 May 2010, commencing 9.00 am to 1.00 pm in the Banqueting Suite of the Stadium of Light** is to be considered further by Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs at their informal meeting on 27 July 2009.
- 7.2 It is also suggested that the format of next's year conference would be subject to change, through the possible introduction of world café type workshops, used at many conferences to foster collaborative dialogue in replace of the breakout sessions. In addition to this, it is envisaged that

invitations to the conference would be extended to the Council's partners to build upon effective partnership working.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are requested to consider the feedback from this year's Scrutiny Conference along with the tentative date of 20 May 2010 for next year's Scrutiny Conference.

9. Background Papers

Evaluation Return for Scrutiny Conference 2009

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